

Acts Chapter 4 Con't

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, if you take the sheet that you have been given, and this is our, I guess we could call this our first day of summer Bible class.

What is today? The 21st of June? And this is the official kickoff of summer, and it looks like it's liable to be a long, hot one.

We are in Acts chapter 4, and we will just resume at the top of page 452. You'll see that down in the lower left-hand corner. This is a major confrontation in the book of Acts that is taking place early on.

And that which precipitated it was the healing of this man at the gate beautiful, when Peter and John said, And silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee.

In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And that's exactly what happened. And this man rose to his feet. He had never been on his feet in his life.

[1 : 08] And I think the record says something that he was 40 or 42 years of age. Excuse me. Lame from his mother's womb. Never walked a day in his life.

And drew a huge crowd because they are at the temple complex that could easily accommodate several thousands of people.

This is a big, big area. It was under construction at the time. And Herod had poured enormous resources into enlarging and refurbishing the temple area.

And that's why it's referred to as Herod's temple. Actually, it is a huge extension. Not so much of the temple itself because that remained fairly static.

But all of the surrounding area was being greatly enlarged. The wall was being expanded. And the surface that was being laid down, of course, was all cobblestone, limestone.

[2 : 15] And it encompassed an area as great as 12 football fields side by side. So it's a huge area that we are talking about. And it would easily accommodate a great throng of people.

And there were great throngs of people accustomed to meeting there, particularly in the area that is called Solomon's Porch or Solomon's Colonnade. And it was a very inviting area and common for people to gather there by the thousands.

So Peter, when the crowd started gathering, everybody's wondering what's going on. Peter delivers his message and he lets them know that, yes, this is the band.

And he has been lame from his mother's womb and he is now walking. And let me tell you who is responsible for that. And he goes on to preach that it was Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

It is through him that this man stands before you whole. And the crowd is absolutely mesmerized. I think you could have heard a pin drop.

[3 : 23] And Peter is delivering his message. And then coming through this crowd of people that are gathered there, elbowing their way up to the front where Peter is, is the religious establishment and the local temple police, the captain of the synagogue.

He is the one who is in charge or like the sergeant of arms there, keeps orders responsible for what goes on. And they make their way up to where Peter and John are.

They are exasperated, we are told, at the top of page 452 there. They are furious with them for teaching or exasperating at their teaching.

And they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Other translations render this. And announcing in Jesus the resurrection from among the dead.

Or proclaiming Jesus as an instant of the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in hold until the next day.

[4 : 34] They took them into a kind of custody, if you will. And please be reminded that the reason that they were so angry because they preached the resurrection from the dead is that the principal shakers and movers of this outfit are the Sadducees.

The Sadducees comprised primarily the priesthood of Israel. They were Sadducees. And they did not accept the concept of the resurrection from the dead.

Neither did they believe in the spirit. They believed that the physical was all there was. And the Pharisees and the Sadducees would often go toe-to-toe in arguing with each other and debating.

Because, of course, the Pharisees accepted the idea of the resurrection of the dead. The Old Testament teaches it very clearly. All the way back to Job, if a man dies, shall he live again?

That rhetorical question demands a positive answer. Yes, he will live again. And Job says, even though worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh I will see God.

[5 : 45] Well, it's going to have to be a different flesh than the ones the worms destroy. And it will be. It will be a glorified body. So Job knew that as a contemporary of Abraham way back in the Old Testament.

And we are told in Daniel chapter 12 that in the last days the dead shall rise and many to eternal glory and many to shame and destruction.

Because there will be believers and unbelievers. But they are both going to be raised. However, the Sadducees, who could be classified as the liberals of their day, denied the reality of the resurrection of the dead.

And you probably heard the old, old cliché from way back when that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. That's why they were so sad, you see.

Okay. Moving right along. They laid hands on them and put them in hold until the next day, howbeit many of them which heard the word believed.

[6 : 46] And the number of the men was about five thousand. And what was it that they believed? They believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that Israel crucified Him.

That's what they believed. There is no indication at this point in time that they believe in the application of the efficaciousness of Christ's death to their own personal self.

I think that's coming later. I don't believe they've got a handle on this yet. But it's going to begin surfacing. It came to pass on the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes, these are all the shakers and movers, and Annas, the high priest, that's Sadducee number one, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law or his father-in-law, whichever, and John and Alexander, not to be confused with John, the brother of James, sons of Zebedee, not to be confused with John.

There are several Johns in the Bible. This is a different one. And Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, those related to him, they were gathered together at Jerusalem.

When they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have you done this? And then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, translated ghost here in the King James, which is not a good translation, but it's filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, You rulers of the people, now he acknowledges who they are, he knows these are the shakers and movers, you rulers of the people, and you elders of Israel, if we, Peter meaning himself, and the apostles with him, if we this day, be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus the Messiah, that carries a lot more weight,

[9 : 10] Peter saying it that way, the King James just translates it, Jesus Christ, and I wish they had never done that, from the very beginning, because people get the impression, that Jesus is his first name, and Christ is his last name, that is not true at all, Christ is a title, in the same way as king, or prince is a title, or queen is a title, it should be rendered, Jesus the Christ, which literally means, the anointed one, and it would have been, even more appropriate, if they had translated it, Jesus the Messiah, because that is what the word Christ meant, to them, Christos, the Messiah, and when you put it in those terms, it speaks much more powerful, to a Jewish audience, because for whom had they been waiting, for 4,000 years, the Messiah, and Peter is saying, he is that one, he is the Messiah,

Dr. Alfred Edersheim, who was born and reared Jewish, came to faith in, the Lord Jesus, as his personal Savior, and he ended up writing, a tremendously scholarly work, I don't know that it has ever been excelled, a massive two volume work, penned as only a Jew could pen it, thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament, and having come to embrace the new, and this two volume massive work, that he produced, is called, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, and he named it right, it's Dr. Alfred Edersheim, and Peter is making the case here, for who this one is, the name of Jesus the Messiah, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, now who is the you, the you is the corporate mass, of Jewish humanity, that is spread out there, in front of Peter, that is listening to this message, and I think he is directing it, primarily the you, at the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the leaders, the rulers of the people, they are the leadership, this is the religious establishment, and I wouldn't be surprised, if Peter wasn't pointing at them, whom you, you crucified, even by him, whom God raised from the dead, even by him, does this man stand here, before you whole, this, is the stone, which was set at naught, of you builders, which is become the head, of the corner, well, what in the world, is that all about, what does that mean, this is a fascinating passage, and Peter is invoking it here, and including it, in part of his message, what Peter is doing, is he is making, a connection, what's the connection, well, if you have your Bibles, and you don't have this, in your sheet, but I want you to look, for a moment, at Matthew chapter 21, this is a powerful, powerful concept,

Matthew chapter 21, and bear in mind, when these events, are transpiring, Matthew 21, is getting very close, to the time, of crucifixion, this is near, the end, of the earthly life, of Christ, we're going to go on, just a couple of more chapters, and you'll come to the, Olivet Discourse, which of course, our Lord gave, immediately before, he was arrested, so here, he has arrived, in, I think he's already there, no, he's almost, in chapter 23, he will be lamenting, and weeping over Jerusalem, where he weeps, and as he approaches the city, but he is close to it, here in Matthew 21, and this is a, remarkable passage, let's, let's see, well, we'll just have to jump in, for time's sake, at verse 42,

I can't establish, the whole context, but I would encourage you, to read it at your leisure, we'll just have to jump in, at verse 42, Matthew 21 and 42, Jesus said to them, did you never read, in the scriptures, the stone, which the builders rejected, this became, the chief cornerstone, this came about, from the Lord, and it is marvelous, in our eyes, now what he is doing here, is quoting, a passage of scripture, scripture, that I'm sure, they were familiar with, from the Old Testament, and when he says, to this crowd, did you never read, I'm sure they could have, responded, yeah, sure, we've read that, we know that, but I'll tell you one thing, they didn't have a clue, as to what it meant, and we need to go back, for just a moment, to where this quote, is taken from, because, if you've got, a new American standard Bible,

I know some of you do, you will see, that the quote, of verse 42, is all, in capital letters, and that is a tip off, because in the, new American standard, in the new testament, of the new American standard, every time, there is, a passage, that is a quote, from the Old Testament, they put it, in large capital letters, so it stands out, and then there will be, a side note, referencing, where in the Old Testament, that passage, comes from, so, when Christ, quoted that, he was actually, quoting, from Psalm, 118, Psalm 118, and sprinkled, throughout the Psalms, are messianic, references, David, the king, is credited, with having written, most, of the Psalms, we know, he didn't write all of them, there were other authors, as well, but the spirit of God, inspired David, to write most of the Psalms, and, on numerous occasions, he would, launch into, what we call, a messianic, prophecy, that is, something, that referred, to the Messiah, when he came, or when he would come, and bear in mind, that David, lived, and reigned, as king of Israel, approximately, a thousand years, before Christ, was born in Bethlehem, so we're talking, about a long span, of time here, and in verse 22, the Psalmist, says, the stone, which the builders, rejected, has become, the chief cornerstone, what in the world, does that mean, and, as the Jewish people, scribes, rabbis, etc., read this passage, back in the Psalms, for hundreds of years, every generation, of Jews, would come along, and they would, of course, read these passages, read the Psalms, and I'm suspected, every one of them, would scratch their head, and say, what is this all about, the stone, which the builders, rejected, has become, the chief cornerstone, well, even on the surface, even if you take it, without any reference, to Christ at all, you kind of get, the impression, that there is, building material, that is offered, but the builders, rejected that material, and yet, that rejected material, turned right around, and became, the most accepted, and pronounced, of all the materials, it's become the cornerstone, but what does that mean, what is it referring to, and Christ quotes this, from Psalm, 1.18, in Matthew 21, and he is making, a connection, between that, long, obscure, verse, back in the Psalms, that nobody, could connect, he is making, that connection, to himself, and Peter, puts the icing, on the cake, in the passage, that is before us, when Peter says, back to your sheet again, verse 11, this, this one, referring to, him,

[19:00] in the verse before, this, is the stone, or we could render it, he, is the stone, you'll see the ASV, the American Standard Version, renders it, he, he, is the stone, scorned by you builders, or treated with contempt, or despised, or rejected, cast away, thrown away, which is become, the head, of the corner, and, basic English renders it, to become, the chief, stone, of the building, or the keystone, in the New English Bible, now, I've got to give you, a little bit of background, about this, because, otherwise, it won't make, a whole lot of sense, in Israel, if you go there, even today, as is the case, throughout most, of the Mediterranean world, you will not find houses, for the most part, made of wood, like they are here, or buildings made of wood, or just very, very few wooden structures, everything, is made out of stone, building blocks, not cinder building blocks, like we use here, in the United States, but, limestone, quarried, from abundant quarries, they take, huge amounts, of limestone, and, shape it, because, limestone, is, relatively pliable, as stone goes, and I,

I wasn't aware of this, but, limestone will even burn, you can burn, limestone, and reduce it to ashes, and the Romans did that, when they came in there, and occupied, Jerusalem, and Israel, they deforested, huge numbers of trees, I mean, there were great forests, all over the area, and they cut them down, virtually denuded the area, and they used the wood, as fuel, for fire, to burn the limestone, because when they burned, the limestone, they could reduce it to ash, and then they could, refigure the ash, and mold it into whatever, they wanted, and that's what they did, in many cases, so since Israel, has been, reestablished, as a state, they plant trees everywhere, to compensate for that, and since 1948, there have been, 50 million, trees, planted in Israel, and they plant trees, for everything, they can think of, and there's huge, huge numbers, of trees over there now, well, this limestone quarry, was, such that, it was a huge, huge area, and many are of the opinion, that much of the limestone, that was quarried, for the building blocks, of the wall, and, the cobblestones, for the floor, were taken, from, that immediate area, that there is, a cavernous area, hollowed out, under the temple mount, and that, that's where they got, most of the stone, and fellas,

I am not exaggerating, when I tell you, some of the stones, in the wall, are as large, as that wall is long, single stones, and like, three feet, thick, and, as much as, as long, as that wall is, and, four to five feet, high, can you imagine, how many hundreds, of tons, that thing would weigh, so, the name of the game, of course, is, you don't carry that thing, any further than you have to, so they got, many of those stones, right there, from that area, and, immediate to Jerusalem, and placed them in the area, well, the law required, excuse me, the law required, that when the stones, for the holy site, were being, quarried, they were not allowed, to work on them, on the job site, they had to get, the precise dimensions, of the stone, and the shape, of the stone, at the quarry, and do all the cutting, at the quarry, and then, deliver it, to the job site, as a stone, already finished, ready to be, put into place, so, they would give, the specifications, for the stone, that was needed, for this particular, area here, and they would send, that information, to the quarry, and it would be, quarry a stone for us, of these dimensions, and of this shape, and they would, diagram it out, and everything, and then, the stone masons, and in Israel, there were, thousands, and thousands of men, who made their occupation, as a stone mason, and they would, get the orders, for that particular stone, and then, it was their responsibility, to shape that stone, at the site, and then, deliver it, to the job site, for placement, wherever it was required, when it got, to the job site, the building foreman, who was in charge, of that particular area, would examine, the stone, and make sure, that it met, all of the specifications, that they had set forth, they would measure it, and go over it, and everything, and look it all over, and if for any reason, and mistakes do happen, if for any reason, the stone, was not, acceptable, the foreman, of the job, would stamp the stone, rejected, unacceptable, and they would have to, set the stone aside, or, take it back, to the quarry, and rework it, if possible, but it could not, be put into the place, for which it was intended, because it was, unacceptable, and the point, becomes quite clear, that Jesus Christ, was set forth, before Israel, as, the building stone, that they rejected, and Peter says, and the stone, that you rejected,

God has made, the chief cornerstone, you didn't think, that he, Jesus of Nazareth, he did not meet, your specifications, and your qualifications, for a Messiah, you rejected him, probably on various grounds, but we know, there were a lot of things, involved in that, but nonetheless, they, had the responsibility, for embracing, or rejecting, this stone, and they rejected him, they said, we will not have, this man to reign over us, they did not accept, his Messiahship, they did not accept, his miracles, they did not accept, anything about him, they rejected him, and Peter is saying, you need to understand, you rejected him, but God didn't, you rejected him, and God promoted him, because God has made him, the chief cornerstone, and if you know, anything about building, you know how important, it is, to have, the cornerstone, precise, in place, exactly where it belongs, because, once the cornerstone, is laid, then, all of the other, building stones, orient, from that cornerstone, that becomes, the focal, that's the most important, critical stone, of the whole building, because, everything, takes its cue, from that cornerstone, in the direction, that it goes, and the way, that it is built, and this is exactly, the point, that Peter is making, that Jesus Christ, has become, the head of the corner, or the cornerstone, and, there is even a, even a song, that is written, about that today, a beautiful, beautiful piece of music, about Christ, being the cornerstone, he has become, the head of the corner, neither, neither, is there salvation, and any other, for there is, none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby, we must be saved, this is one of the, electric passages, of the New Testament, that in, very clear cut, dramatic fashion, sets forth, unequivocally, exclusivity, the exclusivity, exclusivity, of the person, of Jesus Christ, and it is a verse, like this, and like John, 14, 6, that we are, absolutely compelled, to set forth, in the midst, of all of the clamor, today, about there being, multiple ways, of salvation, and multiple faiths, all of which,

God is pleased with, etc, and so on, and so forth, it is not true, we claim, that the scriptures, make it very, very clear, that Jesus Christ, is not only, the way of salvation, he is the only way, how can you Christians, we are asked, how can you Christians, think, that Jesus Christ, and that Christianity, is the only way, where did you get that idea, well I can promise you, we didn't think it up, it wasn't our idea, and, it would be, a whole lot easier, for us, if we didn't have, to insist on that, but it's what, God says, it is what, God has provided, he provided, his own son, to be the propitiation, for our sins, and all he is saying, is, mankind, was not, deserving, of, any, salvation, through, any, means, and yet,

[29 : 00] I have made, a way, of salvation, available, please, don't fault me, for not making, multiple ways, available, can you not, give me credit, and thanks, for making, one, understanding, you didn't have, that coming, Jesus Christ, is a gift, of God's grace, and rather, than find fault, with the fact, that he's only given, one way, we should be, profoundly grateful, that he is given, a way, and that it is, through his son, this is the message, that Peter is delivering, and there is, no mistaking it, there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby, we must be saved, this perhaps, perhaps more, than anything else, is one, of the, greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, the greatest, to biblical, Christianity, and yet, it is something, upon which, we absolutely, must not, backtrack,

I, I understand, I understand, the attitude, and the motivation, that some Christians, have, in refusing, to insist on this, and they will say, things like, well, we don't know, maybe God has made, other provisions, for other people, we don't know, well, we do know, the scriptures, make it very clear, and we ought to be, willing to stand up, for what is set forth, in such clear cut fashion, we must understand, that, and our defense is, our defense is this, listen, we didn't insist on this, the exclusivity, of Jesus Christ, for salvation, is not our idea, and it would be, a whole lot easier, and a whole lot more popular, to just preach, whatever, you know, it doesn't matter, what you believe, as long as you're, sincere about it, God will accept that, well, he won't, that denies, the whole purpose, of God providing Christ, if there are multiple ways, if there is salvation, through any other means, then Jesus Christ, really died for nothing, he might as well, have just stayed put, he wouldn't have had, to come to earth, because, there are multiple ways, of getting to God, well, there aren't, and the scriptures, make that very clear, and this is one, of the most, unpopular aspects, there is, to proclaiming the gospel, because, you are telling people, that there is only one way, and let me tell you something, if there is anything, that people like, if there is anything, that they insist on, especially, in the western world, and in particular, in the American part, of the western world, is this, people love, their options, they love, to have choices, that's why, there are so many, different kinds, of automobiles made, people love, their choices, they love, their options, and they want, to make options, when it comes to, a belief system, that is pleasing to God, well you can go, this way, or that way, and it doesn't make any, well it makes a lot of difference, because there is only one way, and Peter makes that very clear, questions or comments, the food is here, anybody,

Roger, that verse, for some reason, got me right back, in Genesis 1, 1, you either start there, and believe that, yeah, I agree, did the heavens and earth, and everything, passed, and after that, or you don't, that's true, that's true, absolutely, and, and if you cannot, put any confidence, in Genesis 1, 1, you're really, at a loss, to put any confidence, in John 3, 16, it all hangs together, absolutely,